CITIZENS' PERCEPTIONS ON THE EFFECTIVENESS OF COUNTER TERRORISM MECHANISMS USED BY THE GOVERNMENT: A CASE OF NORTHEASTERN REGION, KENYA

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Abstract:

Terrorism in Kenya in particular and the world in general has become a huge mysterious and unresolved phenomenon. It has given governments nightmares. It often shapes up and assumes the behavior of a chameleon and strikes from the least expected angle. Many people lost their lives here in Kenya and across the globe. A lot of resources and intelligence were applied by even the relatively most powerful nations in the world but could not eventually succeed. It is an emerging and evolving issue. Terrorists employ different strategies besides the traditional forms. For example on the Garrisa University attack during which 148 students were killed, Kenyan born nationals were used to carry out the attacks, one of the attackers being a law graduate from a local university. These new strategies increasingly show that terrorists are recruiting, training and executing attacks within Kenya mercilessly. In light of the above, this study was initiated to understand the various modalities the government uses to counter terrorism, seeks to review these strategies and suggest diversified, comprehensive, multidimensional and all-inclusive strategies of counter terrorism, in Kenya and the Horn of Africa. The study was carried out in the Northeastern counties of Mandera, Wajir and Garissa targeting 120 respondents. The respondents were randomly selected with adherence to the diversity in the population. The study found out that the strategies used by the government to combat terrorism is not effective and has not achieved its objectives. The government uses militaristic form which has made the residents not cooperate with the security apparatus. The research suggests that the government changes its tactics and makes it more participative and collaborative.

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1. Introduction

According to United Nations, terrorism is defined as "*the unlawful use of force and violence against persons or property to intimidate or coerce a government, the civilian population, or any segment thereof, in furtherance of political or social objectives*. Terrorism is a major risk to societal existence and hence an illegal act under counter terrorism laws of states. Terrorism is also considered a war crime under the laws of war when applied to target non-combatants, such as unprejudiced military personnel or civilians. The symbolism of terrorism can harness human fear to help achieve certain goals. The word "terrorism" originates from the French term terrorism and initially referred to state-terrorism as practiced by the French during the 1793 - 1794. The word "terrorisme" is a derivative from a Latin verb *terrere* which means "*to frighten*".

In Kenya, terrorism has taken different shapes and turns. International terrorist organisations emerged in 1988, and carried out the 11/9/2001 terrorist attack in the United States which has been termed the emergence of contemporary terrorism. This has been worsened by the emergence of its sister terrorist organizations.

Many people lost their lives in terrorism related attacks. Most notably are the west gate attack and Garissa University attacks where close to 70 and 147 people lost their lives respectively. Many others were tortured, maimed or disappeared through counter terrorism used by the government. This study therefore seeks to investigate the drivers/causes of terrorism in Kenya, analyze counter terrorism mechanisms in Kenya, establish the perception of the public on the mechanisms used by government of Kenya, evaluate the effectiveness of counter terrorism mechanisms in Kenya and suggest better mechanisms to combat and neutralize terrorism in Kenya.

2. Literature review

The 11/9/2001 attack by terrorists in the US has indeed raised the awareness about contemporary terrorism; it however did so in a rather narrow manner. Nowadays, it seems that terrorism is equated with Islamic violence. Terrorism is however a broad concept that has its origins in the French Revolution.

Therefore, terrorism is not a phenomenon of recent years and is certainly not exclusively related to Islam. Schmidt's typology of terrorism illustrates its broad character. Schmidt's (2008) distinguishes between five types of terrorism: social revolutionary terrorism (left-wing), right-wing and racist terrorism, single issue terrorism, nationalist and separatist terrorism (including ethnic terrorism), and finally, religious terrorism.

The drivers of terrorism push factors such as poverty, unemployment; marginalization and discrimination among other factors have been proven to drive

terror especially in certain environments. It has been progressively acknowledged that an exhaustive priority and focus have not been given to those identified variables.

USAID (2009) emphasizes the importance of categorizing and distinguishing drivers of terror into main domains. Such includes drivers contributing to firstly, the recruitment into terrorist organizations, secondly, community support or tolerance of their activities; and thirdly, enabling terror environment conducive for terror attacks. The report further stresses that counter terror programs ought to be designed with the knowledge of the specific country and community location in regards to the dynamics of radicalization and root causes of terror.

Ludlam (2012), human rights are universal values and legal guarantees that safeguard individuals and organizations from actions and mistakes by state organs that violate basic freedoms, entitlements and human decorum.

The objective of terrorism is to put the rights of people at stake, destroy the rule of law and democracy (Mogire and Mkutu, 2011, p.490). It goes contrary to the core values laid in the United Nations Charter of 1945 and many other international tools such as upholding human rights, peaceful conflict resolution, forbearance between nations and people, the rule of law and the bylaws governing armed clash and the protection of people (Lind and Howell, 2010, p. 337).

These are the few activities of human rights violation reported and captured the attention of the international community. The Kenya constitution 2010 upholds the right of every person to life and shall not be deprived of life intentionally, except to the extent authorized by the law (Whitaker, 2007). This is the essence of the universal and regional law. The universal and regional law of human rights is aware of the obligation of states to safeguard the people subject to their level of command.

According to Kenya constitution 2010, Article 29, every person has the right to freedom and security of the persons, which include the right not to be treated or punished in a cruel, inhuman or degrading manner. Prevention against afflictions and other brutal, merciless or humiliating treatment does not give in to threats brought forth by terrorism or to the suspected threat posed by a person to the security of a State. Nonetheless, States have frequently taken up policies to curb terrorism whose effects undermine this complete prevention (Piombo and Lischer, 2008).

3. Methodology

3.1 Sampling
120 respondents were selected for this study. Sex, age, level of education and experience were important parameters considered in the sample selection.

3.2 Sources of data collection

a. Primary sources

A well-planned and structured questionnaire was presented to the sample selected. Data confidentiality was well considered.

b. Secondary sources

Relevant information from past records, newspapers, articles and booklets were collected and reviewed to establish the gap that existed.

3.3 Tools and techniques for data collection

Questionnaires, interviews and observation were the important tools for collecting data. Books, reports, journals and articles that were relevant to the study were reviewed and studied. Dishonest and incomplete information were discarded.

3.4 Plan of analysis

Data was well tabulated and corresponding percentage given. Tables and graphs were used to get accurate information. Inappropriate and biased responses were discarded.

5. Findings and discussions

5.1 What do you think are the causes/drivers of terrorism in Kenya?

**Table 1:** The causes/drivers of terrorism in Kenya

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
1. Marginalization	28	23
2. Illiteracy	8	7
3. Unemployment	22	18
4. Bad governance	19	16
5. Religious fundamentalism	30	25
6. Foreign influences like international terrorist organization	7	6
7. Peer influence	6	5
8. Others	0	0
Total	120	100

Source: Authors' own survey, August 2018.

5.1.1 Analysis

In the above table, 23% of the respondents opined that marginalization was the main cause of terrorism in Kenya, 6.6% of the respondents alluded that illiteracy was also another cause of terrorism while 18.3% and 16% of the respondents suggested that unemployment and bad governance respectively were the main causes /drivers of terrorism in Kenya. In addition, 25% of the respondents questioned indicated that religious fundamentalism was another cause of terrorism in Kenya, 5.8% of the respondents felt that foreign influences such as international terrorist organization is the driver of terrorism in Kenya.

Graph 1: Drivers of terrorism in Kenya
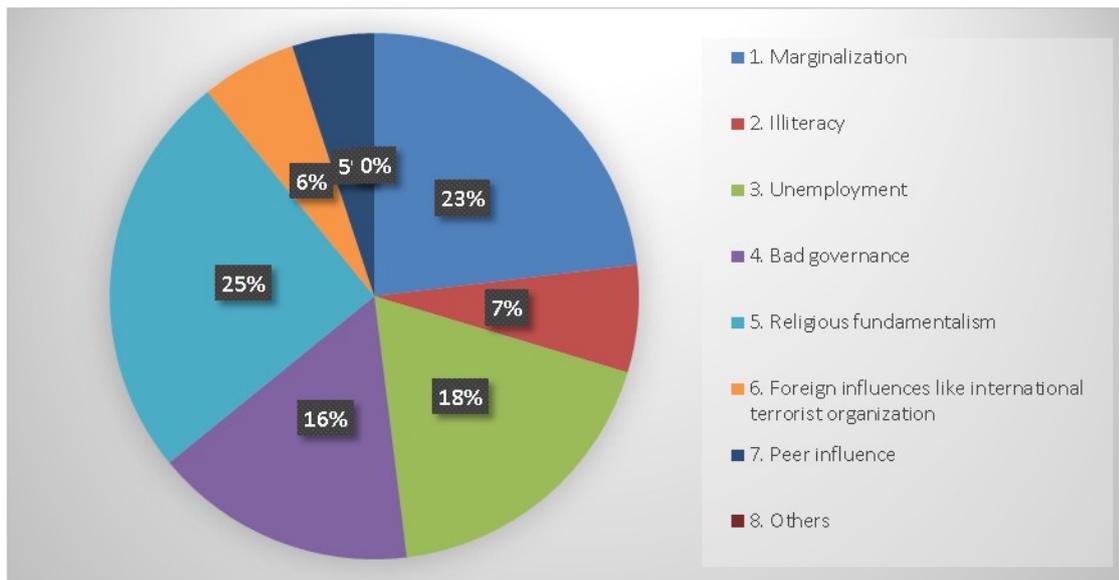
5.1.2 Interpretation

Religious fundamentalism, marginalization and bad governance are the major causes of terrorism in Kenya. The religious institution's curriculum should be brought under Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development (KICD). It should approve and monitor what is taught in madrassas in Kenya. The government should also step up strategies to make sure residents who feel they are marginalized are reassured through improved and reliable governance.

5.2 What is the major government of Kenya's mechanism on countering terrorism?

Table 2: Major government of Kenya's mechanism on countering terrorism

| Responses	Frequency	Percentage
1. Use of force	80	67
2. Use of participative diplomacy	3	3
3. Strengthening border patrol	7	6
4. Addressing marginalization	4	3
5. Improving governance	8	7
6. Empowering the youth who are mostly affected	1	1
7. Entrenching contents Of terrorism on our education system	0	0%
8. Profiling of people/community/sections suspected of supporting terrorism	17	14
9. Any other (kindly state)	0	0%
Total	120	100

Source: Authors' own survey, August 2018

5.2.1 Analysis

In table two above 66.6% of the respondents have indicated use of force was the major government of Kenya's mechanism on countering terrorism, 2.5% of respondent said that use of participative diplomacy was a mechanism used by Kenya government on

countering terrorism. While 5.8%, 3.3% and 6.6% of the respondents had suggested that strengthening border patrol, addressing marginalization and improving governance respectively were the mechanisms employed by the Kenya's government on countering terrorism in Kenya. In addition, 14.2% of the respondents suggested that profiling of people/community/sections suspected of supporting terrorism were also mechanism used by the government in countering terrorism in Kenya while a minimal percentage of 0.83 indicated that empowering the youth who are mostly affected is the mechanism used by the government in countering terrorism in Kenya.

Graph 2: Major government of Kenya's mechanism on countering terrorism
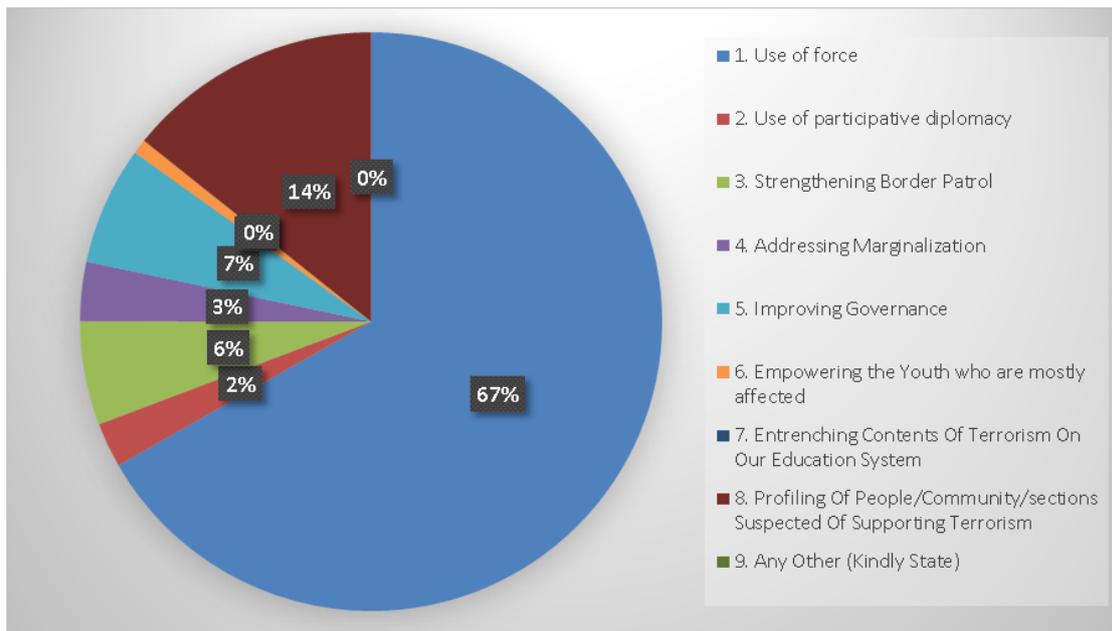
5.2.3 Interpretation

According to this research, use of force is the single major strategy the government has employed for counter terrorism. Residents also feel people suspected to have link with terrorism are profiled, tortured and even killed. The government should minimize the use of force and instead use other friendly mechanisms including creating awareness. The judicial systems should also be used effectively rather than the use of extra-judicial killings, forced disappearance and torture. This will only further marginalize people and will never solve the problem.

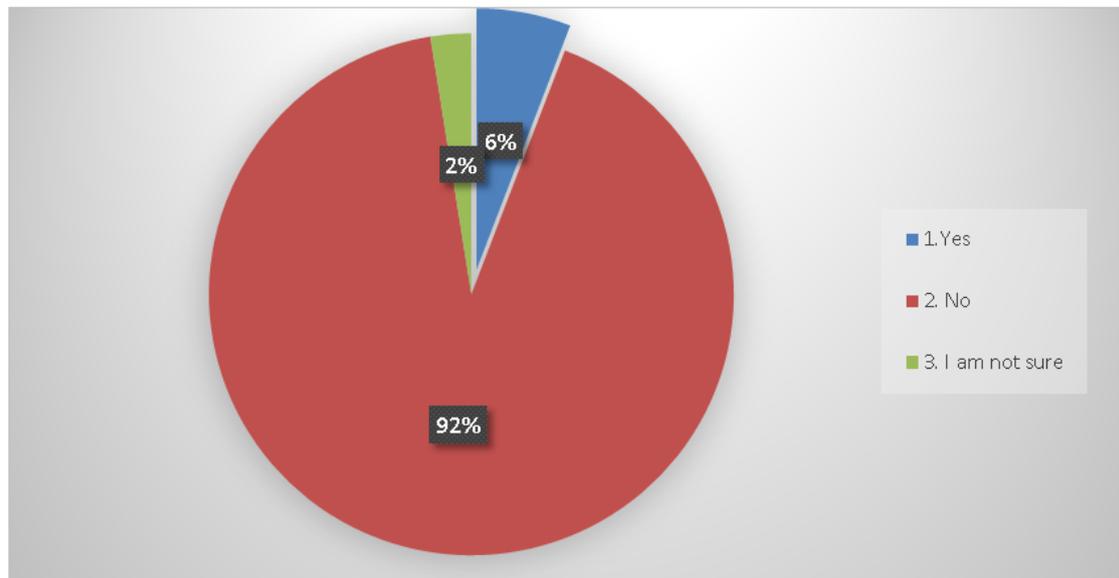### 5.3 Do you support the counter terrorism mechanism applied by the government?

Table 3: Do you support the mechanisms used by the government?

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	7	5.8%
No	110	91.6%
I am not sure	3	2.5%
Total	120	100

Source: Authors' own survey, August 2018.

In the above table, 91.6% of the respondents did not support counter terrorism mechanism applied by the government while 5.8% of the respondents supported. However, a minimal percentage of 2.5% of the respondents were not sure whether they support counter terrorism mechanism applied by the government.

Graph 3: Do you support the mechanisms used by the government?

5.3.1 Interpretation

According to the graph above, residents in Northern Kenya don't support the current strategies used by the government of Kenya to counter terrorism. In light of the above, the government needs to change course and involve the residents more. People in this region feel tortured by both the government security agencies and Al-Shabab militants in almost the same way.

5.4 Do these mechanisms address the drivers of terrorism in Kenya?

Table 4: Do these mechanisms address the drivers of terrorism in Kenya?

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	13	10.8%
No	105	87.5%
Not sure	2	1.6%
Total	120	100

Source: Authors' own survey, August 2018.

5.4.1 Analysis

In the above table, 87.5% of the respondents suggested that the above mechanisms did not address the drivers of terrorism in Kenya. On the other hand, 10.8% of the respondents indicated that it actually addressed these drivers. 1.6% of the respondents were not sure whether the mechanisms addressed the drivers of terrorism in Kenya.

Graph 4: Do these mechanisms address the drivers of terrorism in Kenya?
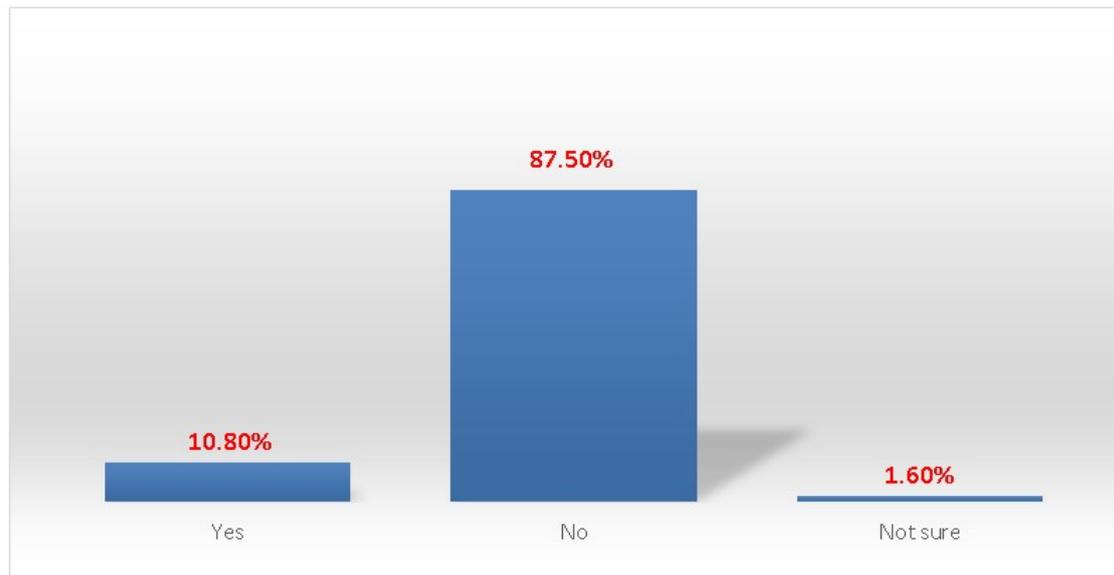
5.4.2 Interpretation

According to the research findings, respondents feel the drivers of terrorism activities are not addressed by the mechanisms used by the government. They are just being suppressed and can rejuvenate itself anytime. This is ticking time bomb.

5.5 In your opinion, what are your suggestions on how terrorism could be countered in the best of ways in Kenya?

Table 5: Opinions on the best ways terrorism can be countered in Kenya

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Education	41	34.1%
Participatory approach	62	51.6%
Withdrawing Kenyan military from Somalia	15	12.5%
Others	2	1.6%
Total	120	100

Source: Authors' own survey, August 2018.

5.1.1 Analysis

In the above table, 34.1% and 51.6% of the respondents felt that education and participatory approach respectively were some of the ways on how terrorism can be countered in the best of ways in Kenya. In addition, 12.5% of the respondents suggested that withdrawing Kenyan military from Somalia was the best way on how terrorism could be countered.

Graph 5: Opinions on the best ways terrorism can be countered in Kenya
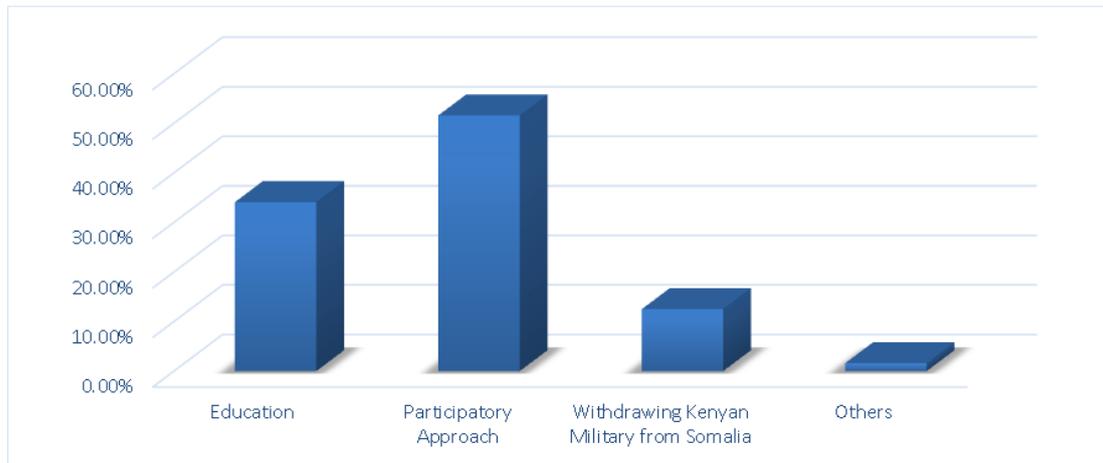
5.5.2 Interpretation

Participatory approach is the best way counter-terrorism can be effective and can yield fruits in the shortest time possible. These include creating awareness through seminars, workshops, training and peer counselling. The government should entrench aspects of terrorism in the education system. This can be done in high schools, colleges and universities.

6. Conclusion and recommendations

6.1 Conclusion

Terrorism is a tricky and very sensitive theme of discussion. It requires well-knit and water tight mechanisms to combat it. A well thought of and researched strategies should be used to make sure it is neutralized. Counter terrorism can be counter defective if the government tackles single handedly. It can hurt the economy, affect the innocent and dent the image of the country globally by attracting global condemnation. Kenya is important strategically for the West and the East. Additionally it houses important international organizations including United Nations Environmental Program (UNEP). Due to this, terrorism issues cannot be overlooked lest Kenya loses this status. However, a more collaborative and participative approach has to be employed.

6.2 Recommendations

The research recommends the following in order to make the issue of counter terrorism achieve its objectives while at the same time minimizing negative impacts on the people.

1. The government needs to change its strategies of counter terrorism by involving all stakeholders so that the fight is not seen to be one sided. Use of force should be minimized to reduce inflicting unnecessary damages to the properties and the

lives of people including forced disappearance. This will ensure support from the locals.

2. Topics dealing with terrorism and its effects should be included in high schools, colleges and university curricula.

3. Madrassa curriculum should be approved by the Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development (KICD). This will ensure proper monitoring of what is taught and lectured in these institutions.

4. A further research needs to be done on the effects of terrorism on Kenyan economy.

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